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ABSTRACT

A brief sketch of the trends in bibliographic instruction from the 30's through the 70's introduces this review of the literature on applications of instructional media in programs for academic library users. Formats discussed include television, programmed instruction, multimedia presentations, and slide/tape presentations. The slide/tape program is seen to be the most popular approach, and it is discussed in more detail, including advantages, disadvantages, production time, length of presentations, evaluation, and duplication of efforts. A list of 70 references is provided. (RAA)

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INSTRUCTING THE ACADEMIC LIBRARY USER; HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND UTILIZATION OF AUDIOVISUAL PRESENTATIONS

by

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF INSTRUCTING THE ACADEMIC LIBRARY USER

Academic libraries exist as the communication link between knowledge and people. Line (1970) said that if they further communication they are fulfilling their function but if not, they are failing. The purpose of this paper is to present an overview of how libraries have been attempting to fulfill their communication function.

Librarians have given a certain amount of thought to library instruction for the past hundred years. The earliest record of any instructional method provided for college students was a pamphlet prepared for Cornell freshmen in 1875; the California School Library Association printed part of the pamphlet in an issue of its Bulletin (1935). Givens (1974) reported that other writings of the thirties were concerned with knowledge in specific disciplines and that bibliographies and manuals were published to meet the needs of college students. Audiovisuals were reported in use and Bennett (1938) described a slide series used at the University of Pennsylvania Library. Henshaw's (1940) list of films included several under the category "Instruction in Use of Libraries" while Murray (1947) reported on the use of slides in Canadian universities.

The programs reported in the forties were directed primarily to orienting students to the library building and to developing skills in the use of the card catalog, periodical indexes, and the more general reference sources. Most programs were presented to freshmen through writing classes. Typical of these was one reported by Garloch (1942) at the University of Pittsburgh.

Library instruction in the fifties did not appear to change

direction but was still recorded as orientation to the library building and to basic reference tools and generally offered as part of freshman composition courses according to Merritt (1956). Cooper (1954) discussed a special concern for instructing students in the medical sciences. Veterans increased campus enrollments, educational programs expanded and librarians developed manuals on the use of particular libraries, replacing the general manuals in use in the forties. The decade of the fifties brought significant changes---the expanding post-war economy, increasing undergraduate and graduate enrollments, and the push for research. The "older" post-war students were more accustomed to independent learning and consequently the library became less concerned with library instruction and use and more concerned with larger buildings, larger collections, the uses of microreproduction, and the implications of the new technology. This does not mean that instruction in library use was dropped, but on some campuses it did change significantly. McComb (1958) reported the use of a tour via closed circuit television for a class of over two thousand. The first librarian to be called a "teacher of library instruction" was reported by Melum (1960); this appeared the beginning of a new phase of library centered and initiated instruction for students. Alston (1960) called for a systems approach and recommended the use of slides for orientation and instructional purposes.

The decade of the sixties was one of unrest and revolt among students. The attitudes of these students were to disregard tradition or the "establishment." Educators had to deal with and meet the demands of students who were more knowledgeable in outlook and experiences than the student of the forties, due in large part to the impact of television. Educators responded with more independent study. Core programs were

reworked and area and interdisciplinary studies appeared reflecting new interests and demands. Again, librarians began to direct attention to the student and his need to make use of expanded library resources. The discussions in the library literature continued to be directed to freshman orientation and efforts were initiated toward more media presentations. Hacker and Rutstein (1978) expressed the view that the various media were contemplated as a possible panacea in reaching large numbers of students. The use of programmed instruction was initiated by McCoy (1962) while Brown (1965) and Doig (1968) were proponents of the use of television. Snider (1965) and Joyce (1961) undertook research studies to try to determine if a relationship existed between skill in library use and academic achievement. A thorough review of the history of library instruction was provided by Bonn (1960) and Josey (1962) examined the role of the library staff in instructional programs. Knapp (1966) completed her research on course related library instruction; research which provided the theoretical base for much of what is done today in course-integrated instruction programs. The library-college idea, first expressed by Shores in the thirties, was explored as redeveloped by Shores (1966). Instruction in library use was becoming a national issue at this juncture. An ALA pre-conference institute was devoted to the topic (Moon 1966) and an ALA Committee on Instruction in the Use of Libraries was formed. The Council on Library Resources awarded a number of grants and fellowships to experiment and improve programs for instructing students. The studies of the sixties basically concluded that students should be provided with use instruction but that library instruction was very much an unsettled issue.

Melum (1971) predicted that the seventies would be the decade

when librarians reevaluate instruction methods for the needs of the user. The user of the present is accustomed to multimedia communications and therefore the potential of media technology is being explored for individual instruction as well as for teaching large groups. The Melum (1971) survey substantiated the opinions of many in the field that with larger and more complex collections, library instruction is needed more than ever before but that it is effective only at the time of need. She also confirmed the rise of media technology. Wagner (1973) and Douglas (1971) reported on new coordinated arrangements between librarians and teaching faculty indicating that the librarian is assuming more responsibility in the total teaching/learning process. Eastern Michigan University began sponsoring an annual conference on library orientation for academic libraries in 1971 (Lee 1972) and the several conferences reflect the changing trends of the seventies. The early conferences dealt with "outreach" as the concept of library orientation--orientation which was quite informal and unstructured. The trend today is for more structured programs, such as credit courses taught by librarians (Rader 1976). Subject bibliography courses taught by the faculty in the various academic departments have been around for a long time according to Dunlap (1976) but they were taught without enthusiasm and without instilling in the students any real sense of the importance of the library to meet their needs. Miller (1978) contends that the attitude of the faculty is the dominant factor in determining library use. Two studies were conducted (el-Hagrasy 1962 and Blazek 1971) which probed the connection between instructor attitudes and student library behavior and instructor influence over library use was certified beyond reasonable doubt.

The continuous and growing interest in library instruction in

general has manifested itself in the formation of new national committees within ALA and ACRL as well as Project LOEX (Butterfield 1973) and its British counterpart, the Library Instruction Materials Bank (Malley 1978). There has been an increase in the development of state and regional committees and clearinghouses (Kirk 1977) which confirms the library profession's concern with the subject and the acceptance by many librarians of the importance of assisting the user to make better use of a library's resources (Lubans 1978). Galvin (1978) notes that in order to achieve the objective of client-centered libraries, the user must be familiar with the whole range of resources which are available. There has recently been a tremendous increase in the number of conferences, workshops, and publications dealing with library orientation/instruction so one might rightly assume that it is one of the "in" things in the academic library world. Kirk (1977) indicates that at the end of the seventies academic librarianship is on the verge of accepting library instruction as an integral part of the information services and that this coincides with the demand for increased accountability and with the movement of faculty status for librarians.

The challenge of educating library users has generated a multiplicity of instructional approaches. Library handbooks, leaflets on specific library resources, specialized bibliographies and subject guides, such as the M.I.T. Library Pathfinders are used extensively in the instructional programs of many libraries (McCormick 1974). Ford (1973) cautions that, although printed guides are almost universal in university libraries, too often they resemble textbooks of librarianship. Tours and lectures have a personal element that can seldom be equaled by any mechanical media (Melum 1971) but the logistical and

time problems associated with providing library orientation and instruction to large numbers of students have led to experimentation with audiovisual productions.

UTILIZATION OF AUDIOVISUAL PRESENTATIONS IN INSTRUCTING THE ACADEMIC LIBRARY USER

The military services sponsored and led the way in major instructional media research following World War II. The research during this period dealt with film while the research from the mid-fifties to the mid-sixties switched to instructional television. Allen (1971) reported that the predominent finding was the equal effectiveness of television when compared with face-to-face instruction.

A few universities have prepared videotape programs which have been shown to large groups of students in orientation sessions or through closed circuit into the dormitories. The investigations conducted by Holley and Oram (1962) and Moffet (1965) concluded that television instruction was a satisfactory but not a superior substitute for the lecture method in teaching library use skills. The Melum (1971) survey found only five university libraries were using the television approach while six others had discontinued its use in favor of other media. Goggin (1974) expressed the view that teaching by television was as effective or more effective than the lecture method as long as a librarian was available for discussion sessions. The University of Florida and the University of Illinois reported favorable experiences with television instruction although the programs had to be updated frequently. The expense of production and the need for frequent revision makes this type of program too costly for most libraries (Goggin 1974), however, Walsh (1974)

recommended videotape rather than slides when it is desirable to show motion and dialogue between students and the librarian.

Programmed instruction burst onto the scene in the early sixties. Allen (1971) stated that the most important outgrowth of programmed instruction research was the impetus given to the use of media in individualized instruction. Wendt (1963) conducted the first major study of the application of programmed instruction to teaching library use skills. Kirk (1971) examined the value of self-contained instruction (a performance oriented type of programmed instruction) as opposed to a lecture/demonstration form of presentation. Computer assisted instruction (CAI) differs from manual programmed learning in that the computer's flexible response capabilities make the learning experience exciting. In fact, CAI's technological novelty may be one of the primary reasons for its success as an instruction tool (Culkin 1972). Pioneer work in using computer assisted instruction for library use instruction was done by Axeen (1967). Hansen (1972) also experimented with CAI in library use and found it to be suitable for introducing large numbers of students to basic library knowledge. Goggin (1974) reported that CAI offers possibilities for individual instruction in the use of the library in the form of packages on a variety of subjects. The University of Denver began using this approach in 1971 and found it popular with the students. According to Culkin (1972), this CAI project has proven to be successful both as an instructional technique and as a public relations vehicle.

Wassom (1967) compared the effects of multimedia presentations against the traditional lecture instruction and found that the group receiving the audiovisual instruction was able to retrieve materials more quickly. A number of point-of-use audiovisual programs were developed

in the Project Intrex Model Library Program at M.I.T. for orientation and instruction of library users. Stevens and Gardner (1974) reported on this modular system of library use instruction which is available to any user at the place of need at any time the library is open. The authors felt the advantages of point-of-use instruction have proven to be worth the time and effort to produce the programs.

Among the most popular instructional media types used in library instructional programs is the slide/tape presentation (Melum 1971 and Hardesty 1978). Hardesty (1978) conducted two surveys, the first in 1971 and the second in late 1976, to obtain information on the growing number of slide/tape presentations developed by academic libraries. Programs of this format, which consist of 35mm slides synchronized with a taped narration, are believed to offer certain advantages over other types of audiovisual formats. Some of the advantages cited by Earnshaw (1974) and Hardesty (1978) are as follows:

Less expensive to produce than videotape or film;

Easy to revise or up-date either tape or slides or both;

Equipment is easy to operate and students need little guidance;

Simpler to produce than videotape or film, yet give both audio and visual;

Frees staff from giving frequent tours or lectures--saves time;

Takes the place of long boring lectures;

Prevents repetition in lectures;

Easy to incorporate into class sessions and serve as a common point of departure for all students in the class;

More complete than unprepared personal instruction;

Can be used at any time by individuals or shown to groups;

Students may have the instruction repeated as often as necessary;

Holds the attention of the students;

Self-service aspect has wide appeal to students;

Point-of-use programs provide information when it is needed;

Flexible for producing a variety of programs in length and subject;

Easy to duplicate materials at reasonable cost;

Good color reproduction.

The Standing Conference on National and University Libraries (SCONUL) in Great Britain chose the slide/tape format to be used in a cooperative project among academic libraries because of the many advantages (Earnshaw 1974).

The use of this format appears to be widely accepted in the United States as well. Hardesty's first survey identified some 258 presentations while the second survey identified 373 presentations. Orientation presentations accounted for 125 of the total in the second survey and the remainder were instruction presentations. For the analysis, Hardesty(1978) considered those presentations which provided information about the physical location of items, the services and personnel to be primarily for orientation and those that provided instruction on how to use the library (how to use a specific library tool such as Readers' Guide or how to search for information relating to a specific topic or discipline) primarily for instruction. One important finding was the duplication of presentations developed by different libraries. Hardesty found that about thirty libraries had developed presentations that dealt primarily with Readers' Guide. Hacker and Rutstein (1978) confirmed that duplication of effort was a fundamental issue.

The major disadvantages noted by the respondents to the Hardesty (1978) survey centered around time, money, and expertise:

Very time-consuming to develop the programs;

Costly, particularly if basic equipment must be purchased;

Need professional technical personnel to produce good slides and accompanying tape;

Local productions tend to be amateurish;

Presentations made by one library generally not suitable for instruction in another similar library;

Suitable commercial presentations not available;

Lack of personal element;

Presentations tend to have static quality.

The literature suggests that the time of librarians can be saved by the use of some audiovisual format, however, a few survey respondents reported that a presentation took more than 200 hours to produce. Palmer (1972) reported that experienced producers of audiovisual presentations estimate about 300 hours to develop a twenty minute slide/tape presentation. Fifty-seven per cent of the respondents to Hardesty's second survey reported using less than fifty hours to produce instruction presentations with eight per cent using more than 200 hours. Fifty-one per cent reported using less than 50 hours to produce orientation presentations with nearly five per cent using more than 200 hours. Hardesty calculated that the average time for each type was about 70 hours. Fifty per cent of the 373 presentations identified in the second survey were jointly produced by the library and the institution's media specialists; twenty-five per cent were produced by the library.

Branstator (1975) explained that it is preferable to present too little rather than too much, the ideal being to present the student with enough information so he recognizes the existence and basic purpose of a resource or research method. The assumption was made that the student will solicit more information when he feels the need for it. The students of today are members of a television culture and are likely to be "turned-off" by poorly done productions since they are aware of good visual techniques. Robinson (1975) expressed the view that the multimedia systems

could not have come at a more opportune time because the students are of the multi-image generation. The assumption was also made that students who would not admit ignorance to a person might feel less reluctant to do so in front of a projector or computer.

The average length of the presentations reported on in Hardesty's second survey was approximately fifteen minutes with some more than thirty minutes long. The longer a presentation is the better it must be to hold the attention of the student and to be effective (Hardesty 1978). The extensive experience at North London (Hammond 1975) suggests that a twelve to fifteen minute presentation is about the right length.

The evaluation of library instructional programs has been discussed a great deal in the literature by Lubans (1972), Vogel (1972), Hills (1975), Fjallbrant (1977) and others but little formal evaluation has been conducted. Wong (1975) compared the effectiveness of the lecture and the slide/tape approach for orientation purposes and Axeen (1967) compared computer based instruction with the conventional lecture. Several of the library orientation conferences (Bolner 1975 and Rader 1976 and 1977) have treated evaluation at length and a whole conference on evaluating library use instruction was held at the University of Denver. Different attempts toward evaluating library instruction programs were discussed at the conference and may of the problems in those evaluation attempts were pointed out in Beeler (1975). The British are cooperating on a national level to not only produce adaptable user education programs but also to conduct research on the evaluation of the programs (Hills, Lincoln and Turner 1977). It is possible that a slide/tape presentation which has not been subjected to formal evaluation may only be reinforcing misconceptions which many students already have about

the library. Hardesty (1977 and 1978) contends that viewer feedback may aid considerably in revising a mediocre presentation and turning it into an excellent program. It was impossible for Hardesty to reach conclusions concerning the teaching/learning effectiveness of the presentations identified because so few of the survey respondents had completed formal evaluations of their programs.

Hardesty (1978) reported that academic libraries had often discontinued the use of films and videotapes because of their costs and lack of flexibility; problems were also encountered when trying to revise and up-date filmstrips. The use of slides only or tapes only was also frequently discontinued because of lack of effectiveness. Slide/tape presentations were cited again and again by the respondents to be one of the easiest and cheapest methods of instructing students, particularly large numbers.

A number of writers, including Hardesty (1978) and Hacker and Rutstein (1978), were concerned about the duplication of efforts among academic libraries and recommended that they cooperate to develop programs which can be broadly used. The time and expense required to develop quality and adaptable slide/tape presentations could then be shared for the benefit of the institutions and the students they serve. Such a cooperative project was begun in Britain in 1971 under the auspices of the Standing Conference of National and University Libraries Tape/Slide Group (Earnshaw 1974). Crossley (1978) reported that its successor, the Section on Cooperative Production of Packages for User Education, is broader based and aims to ensure that the production of effective teaching packages is promoted on a cooperative basis.

Hardesty (1978, p. 23) drew the conclusion that "slide/tape presentations are used widely in academic libraries, but their production is something that should not be entered into lightly. Good presentations take considerable money, time, and expertise. The slide/tape format has several desirable characteristics, but these will not compensate for a poorly developed presentation." Twyford (1969, p. 373) supported this conclusion when he stated that "on the basis of available research the effectiveness of a particular instructional material is more dependent upon the nature of and quality of the message than upon the characteristics of the channel of communication."

The problem of library use instruction has been of concern for more than a century and although a great deal has been written on the topic, experimental research on library instruction is scarce. One interesting fact that has emerged from the research that has been conducted is "that no one means of instruction seems to have any advantage over the other in terms of effectiveness in imparting knowledge" (Ford 1973, p. 96). Lowrie (1975, p. 60) called for research on motivation, research on types of instruction, research on faculty use, and research on relationships between various types of library services. "Without this, all professional efforts will be weakened and librarianship itself will be in danger of disappearing."

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